

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PALERM 00028 121843Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 TRSE-00 HA-05 /064 W
-----130532 122330Z /70
R 120930Z JAN 78
FM AMCONSUL PALERMO
TO SECSTATE 2336
INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L PALERMO 0028

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJECT: VIEWS ON GOVERNMENT CRISES

BEGIN SUMMARY. RESOLUTION OF SICILIAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT
CRISIS NOW IN ABESANCE PENDING FURTHER GUIDANCE FROM ROME.
WHILE LOCAL SITUATION REMAINS UNCLEAR, CURRENT IMPRESSION
IS THAT PCI WILL NOT GAIN ADMISSION TO REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
MAJORITY. END SUMMARY.

1. I HAD LUNCH ON JANUARY 10 WITH SANTI MATTARELLA (DC),
BUDGET ASSESSOR IN THE SICILIAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT AND
FREQUENTLY NAMED AS A LIKELY SUCCESSOR TO REGIONAL
PRESIDENT ANGELO BONFIGLIO. MATTARELLA, A MOROTEO, IS ALSO
A MEMBER OF THE DC NATIONAL DIRECTORATE. MATTARELLA CONFIRMED
WHAT MANY OTHERS HAVE TOLD US: AT ROME'S INSISTENCE A SOLU-
TION TO THE SICILIAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT CRISIS WILL
REMAIN "ON ICE" PENDING CLARIFICATION AT THE NATIONAL
LEVEL ON THE FUTURE OF THE DC-PCI RELATIONSHIP. NATIONAL
DC DOES NOT WANT ITS BARGAINING POWER TO BE COMPROMISED BY
UNSTRUCTURED FORMULA - TINKERING AT THE REGIONAL AND LOCAL
LEVEL.

2. BY PRE-ESTABLISHED SCHEDULE, THE DC WAS TO NAME A
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PALERM 00028 121843Z

REGIONAL PRESIDENT-DESIGNATE BY JANUARY 5 SO THAT THE
REGIONAL ASSEMBLY COULD ELECT A NEW GOVERNMENT WHEN
ASSEMBLY RECONVENES ON JANUARY 16. MATTARELLA SAID ASSEMBLY
WOULD MEET AS SCHEDULED ON JANUARY 16, BUT PARTY AND
ASSEMBLY DECISIONS ON NEW PRESIDENT AND NEXT STEPS ON GOVERN-
MENT FORMATION WOULD SLIP UNTIL ROME SETS PARAMETERS FOR
THE PROCESS. MATTARELLA SAID HE WOULD BE PREPARED TO ASSUME

THE REGIONAL PRESIDENCY, IF A FAVORABLE POLITICAL SETTING CAN BE DEVELOPED FOLLOWING CLARIFICATION FROM ROME. IN LATTER REGARD, MATTARELLA NOTED SERIOUSNESS OF SITUATION IN WHICH EVERY ALTERNATIVE PRESENTS RISKS, THOUGH HE NOTED THAT PARTY STRENGTHS IN SICILY AT LEAST THEORETICALLY PERMITTED VARIETY OF GOVERNING FORMULAS WHICH DID NOT INCLUDE COMMUNISTS. INDEED, MATTARELLA SEEMED OF OPINION THAT BONFIGLIO'S OUSTER WAS DANGEROUS, UNTIMELY AND UNNECESSARY - THE PRODUCT OF OVERZEALOUSNESS ON THE PART OF DC REGIONAL SECRETARY NICOLETTI WHOM MATTARELLA DESCRIBED AS A FORZE NUOVE FACTION-MEMBER WHO SHARES LITTLE OF DONAT-CATTIN'S CURRENT ANTI-COMMUNIST FERVOR. WHILE ALL OF THE SICILIAN PARTY HAD ORIGINALLY JOINED NICOLETTI IN HIS EXCURSION TOWARD THE PCI, THE MAJORITY OF THE PARTY HAS NOW HAD SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT CLOSER, MORE FORMAL DC-PCI TIES. INCLUSION OF PCI IN ASSEMBLY MAJORITY THEREFORE NOW APPEARS LESS LIKELY THAN IT DID ONE MONTH AGO.

CURRENT RETRENCHMENT LOCALLY IS RESPONSIVE TO FEAR OF BACKLASH FROM DC ELECTORATE AND TO RESTRAINING SIGNALS FROM NATIONAL DC.

3. ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS, MATTARELLA SAID LA MALFA'X INSISTENCE ON A DIRECT DC-PCI GOVERNING RELATIONSHIP HAD FRUSTRATED MORO'S EFFORTS TO KEEP THE PCI AT ARM'S LENGTH PENDING A POSSIBLE FAVORABLE CHANGE IN THE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PALERM 00028 121843Z

SOCIALIST POSITION OR DEVELOPMENT OF SOME OTHER WAY OUT OF THE CURRENT IMPASSE. MATTARELLA SAW MORE POTENTIAL HARM THAN GOOD IN STAGING EARLY NATIONAL ELECTIONS SINCE EVEN A STRENGTHENED DC WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT TO GOVERN WITH WEAKENED INTERMEDIARY PARTIES, EVEN ASSUMING LATTER WERE WILLING TO CLOSE RANKS WITH THE DC. MATTARELLA ALSO BELIEVED SOME WAY MUST BE FOUND TO AVOID THE POLITICALLY-DIVISIVE REFERENDA CALLED BY THE RADICALS.

4. MATTARELLA AGREED THAT NEXT STEPS BOTH NATIONALLY AND LOCALLY WERE NOW UP TO THE DC AND BELIEVED PARTY DIRECTORATE MEETING WOULD PROVIDE SOME DEGREE OF CLARIFICATION. WHATEVER THE OUTCOME, DC UNITY MUST BE PRESERVED. A SPLIT IN THE PARTY WOULD BE "DISASTROUS," AND MATTARELLA HINTED THAT SOME "GERMAN FRIENDS" MIGHT BE ENCOURAGING DE CAROLIS AND OTHERS IN THE DC TO BREAK WITH PARTY IF RELATIONS WITH THE PCI ADVANCE TOO FAR.

5. SINCE MATTARELLA WOULD BE ATTENDING TH DC DIRECTORATE SESSION, I TOOK THE OCCASION TO SUGGEST THAT AMBAS-ADOR GARDNER'S EPOCA STATEMENNT SHOULD BE TAKEN FOR EXACTLY WHAT IT IS: AS AN ANTIDOTE TO WHATEVER REMAINING CONFUSION

THERE MIGHT BE ABOUT WHERE THE US STANDS ON A GREATER ROLE
FOR THE PCI.

COLLINS

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL STABILITY, PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978PALERM00028
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780019-0293
Format: TEL
From: PALERMO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780169/aaaacgge.tel
Line Count: 121
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 0738fce3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3782918
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VIEWS ON GOVERNMENT CRISES BEGIN SUMMARY. RESOLUTION OF SICILIAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT CRISIS NOW IN ABESANCE PENDING FURTHER GUIDANCE FR
TAGS: PINT, IT
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0738fce3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014